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**The burdens and potentials of the past: engaging anthropological legacies towards cosmo-optimistic futures?**

**Sharon Macdonald, Henrietta Lidchi and Margareta von Oswald**

In a book published as *After Empire* (2004) in the UK and *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2004) in the US, Paul Gilroy argues that convivial culture – including cosmopolitanism – can offer an alternative to the anxiety and fear of otherness, and of troubled relationships across alterity, that so often characterizes the postcolonial. This special issue is concerned with the question of whether those museums traditionally called ethnographic or ethnological, and their collections, can play a role in supporting more convivial and cosmopolitan relationships between people. In particular, it considers whether the colonial imaginaries and relations that propelled the formation of these museums and collections – that we will call ethnographic in what follows – can be repurposed in new, more positive directions. This is a question of urgency to such museums in a world in which they are variously criticised as either a continuing agency of colonial relations and thinking, and/or as irrelevant to contemporary social and political life. To tackle the question, we bring together an international set of case-studies that variously document and reflect upon attempts to work in new ways with these legacies.

The critical questions of how to address ethnographic museums' legacies and play positive roles in contemporary social and political relations are already on the agenda of many ethnographic museums themselves, and have been so especially over the past decade. This has resulted in a wide range of attempts to variously make such museums 'more relevant' (to use a phrase that is frequently used in museum policy) and in some cases to try to 'de-colonize' them. Quite what is meant by either of these phrases is, however, variable, and can result in very different kinds of strategies and practice, as we discuss further.

The issue of what ethnographic museums are doing and might do has also been the subject of increasing academic attention, as we briefly review below. A great deal of attention, and over a considerably longer period of time, has been given to identifying and analysing the shortcomings of ethnographic museums and collections. This includes pointing out the contexts of unequal power and sometimes outright violence in which collections were made; the deleterious side-effects of categories and ordering principles employed by museum anthropology; and the problematic depictions of 'others' in exhibitions. Less attention, however, has been given to how to address this, though there is by now a substantial and growing literature. It is especially to this reformist project that we hope to contribute, though we recognise that doing so inevitably also involves analysis of existing problems and legacies, through serious investigation of case studies.

This volume began as a panel for the 2016 European Association of Social Anthropology (EASA) conference *Anthropological Legacies and Human Futures*. The conference call was for the discipline of social anthropology to address its own

legacies as a way of ‘taking stock’, noting that ‘taking stock is a way to prepare for the future’.<sup>1</sup> As anthropologists working variously in and with ethnographic museums, we editors – who also acted as panel organisers – immediately recognised museum collections as a significant legacy of the discipline that was not only material but also potentially carried former classifications, principles and values with it. Aware of, and variously ourselves entangled in, innovatory attempts to tackle those legacies, we applied to run a panel that we called ‘Re-visioning material anthropological legacies for cosmo-optimal futures’. The panel was accepted and held at the EASA conference in July 2016 in Milan. We would like to take the opportunity here to thank all of those who participated as speakers in the panel, not all of whom are represented in this volume for various reasons. We also thank those who participated in the lively panel discussion, as well as those who have contributed towards the further expansions and revisions since.

What we seek to do in this special issue, then, is to take stock of some of the contemporary ways of addressing anthropological legacies in regard to ethnographic collections, in and beyond ethnographic museums, with a view to exploring how these might variously contribute to moving towards more convivial futures. This entails consideration and critique of ideas about the cosmopolitan and what we call cosmo-optimistic, as well as attention to difficulties encountered in practice. The cases that we bring together here are examples of the work being undertaken but are inevitably shaped by the contingencies of who made it to Milan in July 2016. But nevertheless they represent an exciting range of examples that we hope illustrate new approaches towards archives, collections and their public consumption. Although it has become relatively common for researchers to address the inevitably complex and sometimes

fraught histories of such collections and to propose new collaborative methodologies, these articles provide some sense of the transformations that are possible and have been attempted in recent years. We believe they add important new emphases and elements to the current state-of-the-art.

There are many ways of looking across the articles. One is regionally, both in terms of authorial locus and the focus of the research. The authors are drawn from across Europe and North America; the case-studies focus on African, Asian and indigenous American collections. All attend to questions arising in regard to ethnographic museums and collections by exploring the role and affects of archives and objects; collaborative methodologies and their terms; the interplay between cosmopolitanism and nationalism as expressed in and through archives, collections and museums; the dissemination of collections through digital means; and the reframing and repurposing of colonial collections to create new forms of cosmo-optimism.

### **Colonial legacies in ethnographic museums**

Ethnographic collections have a wide range of histories, not all of which are colonial in the narrow sense of having been acquired by colonial powers from subject nations through aggressive means during the period of colonial governance. Nevertheless, the formation of a majority of ethnographic collections was certainly within a broader sense of colonial, namely they were enmeshed within what Benoit de L'Estoile calls colonial relations (de L'Estoile 2008). That is, they were produced within colonial ways of surveying, representing and, literally and metaphorically, trying to grasp the world, and within asymmetries of power that allowed the gathering and transport of collections from one part of the world to the other. The ethnographic museums that

resulted were central agencies – and specific physical locations – for supporting and promoting such colonial ordering, and for materialising it through the storage and display of the objects collected. As many scholars have argued, this was not just an esoteric academic pursuit. On the contrary, such museums were an influential source of public information about peoples from all over the world, promoting certain ideas about cultural characteristics and the social and political global order more widely. As John MacKenzie (2010) has shown, for example, the spread of the museum idea throughout the British Empire was a form of governance, with effects both ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’. As part of wider agencies of colonial governance and imagination, then, museums could play into ideas and practices with subjugating effects on the colonised too (see also, for example, Schildkrout and Keim 1998; Bennett 2004; Coombes 2006; Bennett et al. 2017)

Ethnographic museums, then, carry a colonial legacy not only in terms of objects acquired during specifically colonial periods, and not only, indeed, in terms of the objects themselves. Questions of potentially wrongful acquisition of objects, and the issues of ownership to which they lead, are undoubtedly important but are only one aspect of the complexity of this legacy, as shown in a number of the articles that follow. Important too, in considering the extended legacy of colonial relations, are questions about particular knowledge-formations and modes of knowledge-making, about the nature of the ethnographic museum and to whom it orients itself, and about access to the collections and involvement in shaping their futures, both in the past and in the present. De-colonizing the museum requires critical attention on all these fronts.

### **Researching the archive**

To address the colonial legacy, a number of predominant strategies have emerged in ethnographic museums. One of these is to investigate and acknowledge that legacy. As Nicholas Thomas maintains, the task is to understand the historiography of collections in more critically engaged ways than heretofore, giving attention to historical circumstance, material texture and contemporary potential (2016; see also Byrne, Clarke, Harrison and Torrence 2011). There is a good argument that new investigations into collections histories – and ideally intensive provenance research – needs to be the first step in any attempt to de-colonize the museum. If we look at actual examples, however, we can see that there is a broad range of ways and degrees with which such investigating and acknowledging is done. In its more minimal form, it may amount to no more than mentioning on a text panel that a country from which collections were made was a colony or that a particular collector was a colonial official.

More substantial forms of investigation and acknowledgment involve deeper collections research, seeking to understand both specific histories of objects and also the wider forms of social, economic and political relationships of which these would have been part. In other words, it means knowing from whom a specific object was acquired and by whom, with, perhaps, details if they exist about any payment or documentation of transfer; but also, and equally crucially, about the kinds of conditions and cultural assumptions that shaped such relationships, and motivated the movement of objects and of accompanying information and knowledge. Undertaking such research in museums has been widely called for and more sporadically undertaken, often limited by resources such as staff time or the absence of relevant materials. Initiatives to investigate histories afresh are evident in the articles that

follow. No paper illustrates the issues more fully, however, than that of Aaron Glass, Judith Berman and Rainer Hatoum, which lays bare both the work and the potential emerging from a deep investigation of the responsibilities and circumstances of production of Franz Boas' landmark publication, *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*. The multi-year, multi-regional, methodologically ambitious initiative to assemble archives and collections in order to engage in a dialogue with the indigenous families whose cultural patrimony is represented, illustrates how the palimpsest of knowledge located in institutions can be reactivated through research and newly imagined. The very dispersal of this archive around the world makes the project demanding and global in scope, but new digital technologies and social media, render it unprecedentedly accessible. Moreover, they allow a transparency regarding the painstaking process of archival archaeology necessary to open up the text to both new historical understandings and contemporary relevances. For reasons exemplified in this article, there is an increasing move more widely towards such research, and an enthusiasm to explore how digital platforms can transform research and access, and can challenge expectations about power and control of information. If less extensively, many of the other articles in this volume also discuss cases that involved re-entering the collections to re-evaluate understanding and worth. As these also show, however, financial and institutional support for such work remains uneven.

The articles that follow also provide examples of how to acknowledge these histories in more substantial and sometimes more provocative form than the simple mentioning of colonialism in one part of an exhibition. This not only includes more extensive and detailed discussion of the topic, potentially threading throughout, but also considering



its implications more broadly by raising questions about, say, the formats in which museum knowledge has previously been represented. Here, the turn to the digital, including databases, as one possible mode for distributing the ordering of knowledge as well as its access, deserves particular mention, and is discussed in several of the articles here. The articulation between research, authority, the archive and public good is also at the heart of Katja Müller's article,,which looks at how formerly private archives are being deployed in new online and social media projects in India as part of what she calls 'collective online memory production'. Through varying degrees of interaction and crowdsourcing, they thus create new public spheres across the globe.

### **Engaging the legacy**

All of these examples also, however, relate to another important way in which ethnographic museums have sought to address their colonial legacy. This is by trying to engage with people outside the museum who might have relationships with the objects in the museum. One such set of people is those sometimes referred to as source communities, who identify with those from whom the objects came to the museum because of religious, cultural or national affiliations (see Harrison, Byrne and Clarke 2013; Peers and Brown 2003; Golding and Modest 2013; and Onciul 2015, for discussion and examples; also see the contributions by Glass, Berman and Hatoum; Von Oswald and Rodatus; and Scholz). We are, like many others, are not entirely satisfied with the term 'source community' (or 'community of source') due to its potential restatement of a colonial model of discrete peoples and single origins (as Mears' article argues for example); and we recognise too the dilemmas of the term 'community', which too easily ignores differences within groups. The ascription of 'source community' often underpins the (essentialist) idea of unchanging identities

and runs the risk of reaffirming the ordering and naming of people that is historically embedded in collections (Modest and Mears 2012). ‘Heritage communities’ or ‘communities of origin’ do not do away with these problems; and ‘stakeholders’, while having the advantage of potentially incorporating a broader range of interests, carries managerialist connotations, perhaps even the suggestion that one can tote up and rank the stakes that each have. Here is not the place, however, to propose an alternative and we recognise that various of our contributors have used the terms to good and legitimate effect, and, moreover, that these terms have also entered the discourse in the field itself, with, for example, people identifying themselves as ‘source communities’ as part of restitution claims or other ways of relating to the collections.

Other sets of people whom museums may seek to engage in questions of the collections’ colonial legacy and potential, are the diverse audiences that visit, and the diasporas (see, especially, articles by Forni, Lidchi, and Müller). As Clifford (2013:73) has recently observed, the circuits of migration and borderlands complicate questions of loss and difference. Loss, return, relational identities and world spanning networks are the complex frameworks in which museums, audiences and ‘source communities’ operate (Clifford 2013:88). Many of the articles, therefore wrestle with the question of entangled legacies and contemporary significances; as well as with the responsibility for developing tools and strategies to include multiple and possibly conflicting interpretations in order to facilitate new imaginaries that understand the question of colonial legacies through the prism of relational human agency. Silvia Forni’s article does this in multiple ways for example. Citing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s warning of the danger of having a single story and argument for the need for complex understandings, she revisits the controversies over, and effects of, the

well-known *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibition held at the Royal Ontario Museum in 1989. She charts her own development and her role in pro-actively addressing relationships with communities of African descent for whom this exhibition was as significant a milestone in museum and community relations as it was to Museology. Forni thus addresses the key question of drawing on the legacy to produce new engagements by showing ways in which the Museum's earlier problematic attempt to deal with colonialism, itself left a legacy that required repair and remaking – a process that is still ongoing.

Helen Mears's article tackles the question of engaging the colonial legacy by looking at the complex forging of identity among the Kachin of Highland Burma, specifically, their drawing on an early twentieth-century colonial archive of photographs in new creative products, namely music videos. The archive's original circumstance of production contributed to ensuring a plural view of Kachin identity, a view that has been widely embraced by the global Kachin, and given substance by the photographs. Mears thus argues that young diasporic Kachins are reappropriating elements of the colonial archive in their nationally inspired revisioning of a cosmo-optimistic future as a frequently displaced people.

As Brian Durrans, who reviewed our draft volume, noted, these articles “raise questions about how civil society, confronted by legacies and representations not of its own making, can begin to reinvent itself through the mechanism of the museum”. The crucial point here is that ethnographic museums have become increasingly open to, and engaged in, relationships with such groups. In this way, they attempt to address the colonial legacy of museum collections being simply taken from ‘distant

others' for storage and display in, and for, the countries in which they are now housed. As with museum attempts to engage with their colonial legacy by reaching back into the histories of objects, these newly forged relationships can range from somewhat tokenistic and short-term consultation to more extensive and long-term engagement, as we discuss further in the next section.

### **Engaging in and beyond the contact zone**

In some cases supposedly collaborative museum work is restricted to the museum 'going out' to peoples from where objects came from, or to 'inviting them in', to use the kind of phraseology that is typically employed, perhaps in order to gain some choice quotations for an exhibition. While this is undoubtedly often pursued with the best of intentions – especially that of introducing a wider range of voices into the museum – it has sometimes been challenged as being more about providing legitimization for institutions that deserve more thoroughgoing challenge and revision (Boast 2011; Landkammer 2017)

In other cases, the critique is harder to maintain, for these can involve more extensive and two-way traffic that can also change the ways in which museums do things. Examples of the latter include work over decades at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, where the museum has made widespread transformations to its treatment and display of objects, including in the Multidiversity Galleries in which diverse native ontologies form the ordering principles for the displays (Shelton 2006, 2007; Phillips 2011; Kramer 2015). Krmpotich and Peers (2014) also provide an admirable example of long-term engagement over many years between people from the Haida nation and the Pitt Rivers Museum and British

Museum. Here again, the relationship involved the formation of new knowledge for all involved, and it led to changes in museum practice, such as object conservation and handling. Perhaps most importantly, what work like this shows is how suppositions that museum staff will necessarily 'know best' or of there being predetermined outcomes for engagements can be challenged.

An early, influential way of theorising this development – indeed, often a spur to undertaking such work – is James Clifford's notion of museums as 'contact zones' (1997), the latter being drawn from Mary-Louise Pratt in her attempt to address contexts of 'highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism' (1991:30). This was in many ways a challenge to the reductionism of some post-colonial perspectives that considered museum collections only within the framework of colonial knowledge and ambition. Instead, guided by the Tlingit elders who he encountered in the basement of the Portland Museum of Art, Clifford recognised that the meaning of the objects – and the potential of the encounter – exceeded or was simply other than those of the colonial relationship. His recognition that museums could thus act as spaces for more productive engagement between peoples – and that museum objects could provide an impetus for creating new relationships – offered hopeful possibilities beyond those of the earlier postcolonial critiques of museums.

Investigating hopeful possibilities is at the centre of this special issue too. In doing so, however, we are also mindful of some of the potential problems that may be involved. Tony Bennett and Robin Boast are the most vocal critics of the optimism engendered by the idea of the contact zone in museums (see also Dibley 2005). Bennett sees the moves towards engaging diverse communities with museums as essentially part of a

further extension of the tentacles governance (1998).<sup>2</sup> Boast acknowledges that both Clifford and Pratt have expressed warnings about not ignoring asymmetries of power or of the silencing that could also take place in the contact zone, but follows and expands upon Bennett's argument to claim that much collaborative work that has followed in the wake of the contact zone is 'neocolonial'. This is so, he argues, because museums ultimately retain their authority, and in doing so, native peoples or source communities are instrumentalised to museum aims and 'the stories of violence and degradation that was the colonial past' are silenced (Boast 2011:65). While both authors acknowledge that those undertaking such work are well-meaning and even that there have been examples of indigenous people feeling empowered by some collaborative developments, their perspectives are far from optimistic. Their prognosis is essentially one in which the museum as an institution is too ensnared in its colonial legacy to be able to do more than make ultimately rather futile gestures to escape this. The few counter-examples that they mention are of cases where indigenous people play a greater role than usual but even these are analytically sidelined by only being mentioned en-passant or as a foil to an allegedly more powerful negative instances of institutional neo-colonialism

The articles in this volume, then, show awareness of the risks of potential neocolonialism while also seeking to explore the potential for engagements that go beyond this. Andrea Scholz's self-reflective discussion of an initiative that she led that involved collections of the Ethnological Museum in Berlin is a case in point. As part of an experimental programme (Humboldt Lab Dahlem) connected to the future redisplay of the Ethnological Museum in the Humboldt Forum – a new space currently being built in Berlin – she sought to work collaboratively with the

indigenous Universidad Nacional Experimental Indígena del Tauca, Venezuela. This involved investigating collections and creating shared information through a digital platform. As she documents, the initiative was limited in various ways, especially by ill-matched priorities of the indigenous collaborators and the Museum. Nevertheless, she also recognises some of the positive aspects of the initiative for both parties and, perhaps most importantly, identifies ways in which such work could be improved in the future, especially through the establishment of more long-term collaboration and in greater willingness to change museum practice itself.

Margareta von Oswald and Verena Rodatus reach a similar conclusion in their article, which also reflects upon an initiative undertaken as part of the Humboldt Lab Dahlem. Describing a research and exhibition project that they established with the art historian Romuald Tchibozo, they document the ambitions and desires of its participants, and reflect critically upon how it worked out. One key issue that they raise, which also emerges in several other contributions, especially that of Forni, is that of absence: namely, the dilemma not only of what ethnographic museums possess but of what is missing both in the museums and elsewhere. While this contributes to their critique of their own collaborative process they nevertheless argue that such processes of working with and through the contradictions involved contributes, in an additive way, to decolonization of the museum.

Scholz and von Oswald and Rodatus work largely within the Museum – though all as temporary and rather recent recruits whose status remains ambiguous. Silvia Forni and Henrietta Lidchi have worked inside museums over many years, seeking to change them from within. In her article below, Henrietta Lidchi looks at

developments in the museum in which she until recently worked – the National Museum of Scotland – and its precursors, to show a conscious use of institutional conventions and wider societal perceptions to lever change. Her argument relies in part on framing the museum in relation to national politics, especially most recently that of devolution, as well as a longstanding commitment to cosmopolitanism. While acknowledging compromises, her engagement with the Museum from the inside involves consciously seeking pragmatic solutions that can contribute to the development of postcolonial and cosmo-optimistic agendas.

As various other articles show too, then, relations in the contact zone can be messy. Nevertheless, a commitment to working with it, and working through the complexities that arise, can surely provide new possibilities in, for and with museums.

### **Causes for cosmo-optimism?**

In the face of Bennett's and Boast critique, our own interest in the attempts of museums to de-colonize and find new modes of relating may seem to some to be misguided or at least naïve. But we wanted to at least attempt to bring together new examples of such attempts and to address them head-on rather than from the outset assuming them as bit-players in a neocolonial and neoliberal drama. Such presumption, according to other postcolonial critique, can itself be a form of denying agency to those involved, especially the native people or source communities or other groups and individuals who have taken part in or even embraced collaborative developments (Thomas 1991; McCarthy 2007; Geismar 2013; Morphy 2015;) Moreover, it denies agency to those within museums who fight against the system and try to produce change – it leaves them, indeed, subsumed as cogs in the homogeneous



institution. Those articles here that look at museums from the inside all variously explore methodologies for doing things differently. Even if the results are not as far-reaching as their proponents had hoped, each nevertheless shows how even national ambitions can be tempered by museological critique and curatorial agency.

In this volume our ambition then was to remain in cognizance of critique while also being open to the hopes and energy on the ground that we have witnessed as ethnographers and museum workers. In doing so, we hoped to give the actors on the ground their due. To that end, we have brought together a range of detailed empirical cases to see how far they do or don't offer cause for optimism in their opening up of new relational possibilities.

Giving actors on the ground their due also includes doing so for objects. The idea of giving objects their due (Coole and Frost 2010: 3) – that is, recognising their agency and affordances, their capacities to “act back on the world, manifesting resistances, capacities, limits and potential” (Harvey and Knox 2014:4) – has been promoted by the material turn across a number of disciplines (see, for example, (Coole and Frost 2010a; Dudley 2010; Hicks and Beaudry 2010; Harvey et al. 2014). As Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox explain, this also means recognising “that things are *relational*” (2014: 1; their emphasis), that is, they are not only framed and acted upon but “are also potentially transformative of other entities” (ibid.). This is a view, indeed, which is sometimes held by indigenous peoples and that has led to some museums treating objects differently, for example, by creating storage situations that allow them to breathe and eat (Kreps 2003). Giving objects their due can entail recognising the multiple relationships and histories in which they have been and are entangled. This

means recognition of colonial or other moments of removal of objects from their former contexts but equally of the potential complexities in their subsequent travels. Most importantly, it means acknowledging their lives and capacities prior to and independent of colonial appropriation. Those lives and capacities are often what provide the impetus for the hopeful developments that we have noted above and that we present further in this volume. They are frequently the catalysts for change within the institutions themselves as they motivate ‘source communities’ and other interest groups to participate in such projects. They are, in sum, what gives some continuing cause for optimism.

Here, we need to explain our neologism: cosmo-optimism. This was first used by one of us, Sharon Macdonald, in a discussion of cosmopolitan memory and heritage (Macdonald 2013:190). On the one hand, she observed how these notions had analytical traction in describing certain developments in which memories or heritage that had previously been regarded as essentially the property of one specific group – usually a nation – came to be able to figure in the imaginaries and even senses of identity of others. At the same time, however, there was almost always an assumption that this was necessarily a good thing – that sharing beyond one group/nation was a positive development. This was a normative ‘cosmo-optimism’ – the belief that severing from roots and sharing with others was the right direction in which to try to develop. While there are many good arguments for this (e.g. Beck 2006; Appiah 2007) she showed from ethnographic studies that such developments could have unanticipated consequences, including senses of dispossession from those who felt that the memories more properly belonged to them, as well as in some cases leading to those who did not subscribe to the models of sharing to be marginalised. Cosmo-

optimism is, then, a term intended to highlight the positive hopes imbued in developments undertaken in the name of cosmopolitanism but also to signal that these are indeed hopes, and that their playing out in practice may well not live up to the dreams.

In our conference panel title, as eagle-eyed readers may have noted, we used the term ‘cosmo-optimal’ rather than ‘cosmo-optimistic’. The former was part of our hope to attract case-studies of especially successful examples. We came to realise, however, that the term cosmo-optimal easily sounded as though there was one best way of doing things, one secret answer to how to make museums fully cosmopolitan. But that ran against the grain of our awareness that this was highly unlikely and, indeed, would be counter to the pluralism that characterises cosmopolitanism itself (Appiah 2007:144). It also ran against our encouragement to our contributors to investigate and weigh up the cosmopolitan potential rather than to engage in the kind of unreflective celebration of which Boast and others are rightly critical.

In our collective exploration we are also concerned, if sometimes more implicitly than explicitly, to open up what might be meant by the cosmopolitan itself, as Gilroy does in his attempts to find another road than that of postcolonial melancholia. While sometimes seen as an imaginary of the socially privileged – what Craig Calhoun calls ‘frequent flyer’ cosmopolitanism (2002) – or as ‘imperial and liberal’ (Ribeiro 2014 – see Scholz below) or a ‘pretentious universalism’ (Braidotti, Blaagaard and Hanafin 2013: 1), Gilroy advocates a more ‘demotic cosmopolitanism’ rooted in “the ordinary cosmopolitanism so characteristic of postcolonial life” (2006: 67, 71).<sup>3</sup> What kind of

cosmopolitanism, if any, might have productive traction in relation to ethnographic museums and collections is a question that runs through the articles that follow.

In this volume, then, we bring together examples of working with anthropological legacies, and especially of colonial archives and collections, in which there are attempts to re-animate these to new ends that can reach beyond one specific group and that, maybe, just maybe, can contribute towards more cordial forms of social relations across past and existing divides. These are, then, cases in which there might be cause for cosmo-optimism – in the sense that these seem to promise engagements and settlements less along one-way streets and loaded lines. In exploring that promise, we examine where the impediments, contradictions and challenges, as well as the most exciting and productive potential lies.

### **Acknowledgments**

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Sharon did so in November 2016 in Paris, during the opening session of the seminar “Réécrire le passé colonial : enjeux contemporains des collections de musée” (EHESS), and in February 2017 at King’s College, London, at the Cultural Memory Studies Reading Group of the Culture, Media and Creative Industries (CMCI) and German Department.

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<sup>1</sup> Conference website. See:

<http://www.easaonline.org/conferences/easa2016/theme.shtml> (accessed 21 May 2017).

<sup>2</sup> In more recent work, he still keeps the focus on governmentality firmly to the fore but offers some small possibilities of initiatives that are not fully subsumed by this. See especially the final pages of Bennett et al. 2017; and also Bennett forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> See also Benhabib 2006; Breckenridge, Pollock, Bhabha and Chakrabhaty 2002; and Werbner 2008 for various attempts to explore alternative ways of deploying the idea of cosmopolitanism. The Minor Cosmopolitanisms project of some of our colleagues in Berlin is also seeks to 'establish new ways of studying and understanding the cosmopolitan project beyond its Eurocentric legacies' <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/minorcosmopolitanisms/> (accessed 28/5/2017). Braidiotti, Blaagaard and Hanafin 2013 provides insightful discussion on what they call 'the double pull' of the term – the ambivalence captured also in the term 'cosmo-optimistic'.